

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES LEASE
CONSOLIDATION IN SUBURBAN MARYLAND**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Order ADM 1095.1F: Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the Public Buildings Service NEPA Desk Guide, I find that the proposed lease consolidation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offices in Suburban Maryland, as described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA), is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

APPROVED: _____

Date: 3-10-11

Julia E. Hudson
Regional Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
National Capital Region

This FONSI will become final 30 days after publication of its Notice of Availability in the Prince George's and Montgomery County Gazette and The Washington Post, provided that no information leading to a contrary finding is received or comes to light during the 30-day review period.

BASIS FOR FINDING

GSA prepared an environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the environmental impacts that could result from lease consolidation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) offices in Suburban Maryland. The EA was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), GSA Order ADM 1095.1F: Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the Public Buildings Service NEPA Desk Guide. The EA documents the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for the five action alternatives and a no-action alternative.

The environmental issues addressed in the EA were identified through internal scoping and analysis; which included site visits, review of environmental documentation, and site information provided by the offerors. Based on this information, an EA was prepared. A Draft EA was distributed for a 30-day public review period to local, state, and Federal stakeholders and made available online, at GSA National Capital Region Headquarters and at local libraries. The Final EA responds to comments and concerns received during the 30-day public review. The Final EA is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

GSA is proposing to acquire space through leasing in order to collocate four of HHS's current leased locations in Suburban Maryland into one lease location to improve functional efficiency. GSA will enter into a lease agreement for up to 935,401 rentable square feet of space and will collocate approximately 2,900 employees. The delineated area for this solicitation is Suburban Maryland, which is found in the GSA Solicitation for Offers 08-011. The Proposed Action will consolidate HHS components located in various leased locations into one location in order to provide space that will efficiently and effectively meet the needs of HHS. The Proposed Action will create a more efficient work environment and effectively support the agency's mission. The collocation will reduce energy consumption, allow support for information technology, attract and retain employees in a consolidated facility, and provide necessary security measures.

II. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

Six alternatives were considered in detail in this EA, five action alternatives and a no-action alternative. These alternatives are summarized below.

No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the lease consolidation of HHS in Suburban Maryland would not occur. HHS would remain in leased space in the Parklawn Building and three other leased locations in Suburban Maryland including 6010 Executive Boulevard, Rock Wall 1 Building, and Silver Spring Center. No improvements to these buildings would occur.

Irvington Centre at King Farm

The Irvington Centre at King Farm (King Farm) site is located within the City of Rockville, Maryland in Montgomery County. The site is located along King Farm Boulevard and Piccard Drive. The site currently consists of large grass-covered open lots with sparse tree coverage. In addition, the site is located approximately one mile driving distance from the Shady Grove Metrorail Station, which is located on the Red Line. A shuttle service would be provided to bring employees to and from the Shady Grove Metrorail Station. To accommodate the requirements of the SFO, this site will need to be cleared, graded and new building(s) constructed.

New Carrollton Metro

The New Carrollton Metro site is located in New Carrollton, Maryland in Prince George's County. The site is bounded by the New Carrollton Metrorail Station to the east, undeveloped land to the south, Ellin Road to the west, and office buildings to the north. The site currently consists of grass vegetation and some mature trees. In addition, the site is located within approximately 900 walkable linear feet of the New Carrollton Metrorail Station, located on the Orange Line. To accommodate the requirements of the SFO, this site will need to be cleared, graded, and new building(s) constructed.

One Largo Metro

The One Largo Metro site is located in Largo, Maryland in Prince George's County. The site is bounded by Lottsford Road to the east, Harry S. Truman Drive to the south, and Grand Boulevard to the north. The site currently consists of an open lot with few mature trees. In addition, the site is located within approximately 500 walkable linear feet of the Largo Metrorail Station, located on the Blue Line. To accommodate the requirements of the SFO, this site will need to be cleared, graded, and new building(s) constructed.

Parklawn Building

The Parklawn Building site is located in Rockville, Maryland in Montgomery County. The site is bounded by Fishers Lane to the north and Parklawn Drive to the south. HHS currently occupies space in the Parklawn Building. The site is located within approximately 2,300 walkable linear feet of the Twinbrook Metrorail Station, located on the Red Line. To accommodate the requirements of the SFO, this site will need to be renovated.

University Town Center

The University Town Center site is located in Hyattsville, Maryland in Prince George's County. The site is bounded by Toledo Road to the south, Belcrest Road to the west, and a forested conservation area to the north and east. The site currently consists of a surface parking lot. The site is located approximately 2,300 walkable linear feet from the Prince George's Plaza Metro Station, located on the Green Line. To meet the requirements of SFO 08-011, the surface parking lot will be demolished and the site will be graded and excavated to accommodate construction of new building(s).

III. SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Based on the analysis in the EA, none of the alternatives would result in a significant impact to the environment. GSA selected Parklawn Building site because it provides the best value to the Government as evaluated in accordance with the Solicitation for Offers and Source Selection Plan specific to this procurement action.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following is a summary of the impacts associated with the selection of Parklawn Building site. A full description of these impacts can be found in the Final EA:

Soils: There would be no ground disturbance therefore there would be no impacts to soils.

Floodplains: There would be no direct or indirect impacts to floodplains.

Water Resources: There would be little to no impact to surface water. There would be no direct or indirect impacts to wetlands and the building would be constructed to meet or exceed all State of Maryland and Montgomery County regulations. It is expected that there would be no change in impervious surfaces on the site.

Stormwater Management: There would be no increase in impervious surfaces resulting in no increase in stormwater flow. A minor, long-term, beneficial impact would occur from increased stormwater management over existing conditions. ESD measures or other measures may be required to treat stormwater quantity and quality. Stormwater management plans would need approval of Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) and other applicable local agencies.

Coastal Zone Management: This site is not located within Maryland's coastal zone; therefore, there is no impact.

Vegetation and Wildlife: There would be no ground disturbing activities; therefore there would be no impacts to vegetation and wildlife.

Threatened and Endangered Species: No known listed or endangered species would be impacted.

Aquatic Biota: There would be no impact to off-site streams or aquatic biota.

Historical and Cultural Resources: There would be no ground disturbing activities; therefore there would be no impacts to archeology.

Visual Quality: Since there would be no changes to the building footprint of the Parklawn Building, renovation of the Parklawn Building would have no impact on the visual environment. The scale, design, and use of the facility would be consistent with the surrounding development. Nighttime views from nearby residential areas would be impacted from light spillover from security lighting. There would be a negligible, long-term, adverse, impact to the visual quality of the area. Parking garage and site lighting would be shielded to eliminate/reduce spillover beyond the property lines of the site. Native vegetation and trees would be provided so that a view surrounding the site would be of a landscaped area.

Air Quality: Fugitive dust would create a minor, short-term, adverse impact. No additional traffic would be created and there would be no appreciable increase in diesel fuel that is used. The project would be in compliance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Accepted MDE construction site air quality control measures would be implemented in the handling of materials and as part of any potential demolition or grading activities. Fugitive dust control measures and dust abatement/emissions control plan would be implemented. Employees would be encouraged to use public transportation.

Noise: Noise level at the site is similar and average for a developed area. Additional noise would be generated during construction, but the noise generated from operation of the new building would be similar to current sources.

Population and Housing: The consolidation of the HHS would not require the relocation of any HHS employees outside their existing duty station. However, should any employees elect to move closer to the building, the impact would be negligible and handled by available housing in the area.

Land Use Planning and Zoning: The proposed action is consistent with existing and planned development within Montgomery County.

Economy and Employment: While the collocation of these employees to the Parklawn Building may result in some increase of patronage to area businesses that has not occurred since previous Federal employees vacated the Parklawn Building, the impact would be negligible, short-term, and beneficial.

Community Facilities: There would be a slight increase in use of community facilities and services, but the existing facilities and services would be able to handle the additional patronage; therefore community facilities would not be adversely affected.

Environmental Justice: There would be no disproportionate impacts to minority and low-income populations.

Traffic and Transportation: Approximately 200 additional HHS employees would be transferred to the existing Parklawn Building. These 200 employees would

generate additional peak hour trips as shown in the Final EA. The projected traffic increase is not expected to have an impact on the level of service at the studied intersections.

Utilities: The proposed action would comply with Executive Order 13423 and Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA). The lease consolidation would consume a negligible portion of the total water consumption. Electrical usage would consume a negligible portion of the total energy consumption throughout Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO), Allegheny Power, BGE, and Washington Gas systems. The site would have to operate in a sustainable and energy efficient manner and a minimum rating of Silver on the LEED® scale for building design would be achieved.

Waste Management: Waste would be generated during construction/renovation creating a negligible, short-term, adverse impact. This site would operate in a waste efficient manner which would reduce the impact to waste management and a recycling program would be established.

Environmental Contamination: A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was performed at the site. The investigation of the Parklawn Building site concluded that no Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) existed on-site, however, petroleum-impacted soils likely exist on-site and future plans to renovate the site would require remediation of Asbestos Containing Material (ACMs) within the building.

Security: The safety of HHS employees would be provided by a number of security measures. The site design would comply with the most recent Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Security Standards for Leased Space.

Public Health and Safety: Emergency services would not change, nor would the operation of the HHS facility put undue stress on these services. Furthermore, the site is not expected to affect the ability of the local fire and police departments, and area hospitals to provide service to the surrounding residents.